



Operation RIO Update

5 Sep 2003

Maj. Joe Hanus at a pipeline fire near Baiji, Iraq in June.
Army Corps of Engineers Photo.

An update for all SWD employees and Operation RIO volunteers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mission Update: Production of refined products dropped this week from the previous week due to pipeline explosions in the north on 30 Aug 03 which caused damage to nine pipelines. This completely cut off crude flow to the Baiji and Daura refineries. The refineries continued to operate on stored product and at reduced rates. All the associated fires are out and the Iraqi Northern Oil Company has issued a contract for repairs.

The pipeline damage on 30 Aug 03 included the Iraq-Turkey pipeline which now must be repaired before crude can be exported to Turkey. Export from the southern fields continues at about 20 million barrels per month under long term contracts negotiated by the Iraqi Oil Ministry. We continue to bulk import Propane (LPG), Kerosene, Diesel, and Benzene.

The Northern Oil Company is in the process of standing up their security force. The new security forces are replacing the tribal security forces whose Sheikh has been incarcerated on suspicion of being associated with the sabotage to the pipelines on 30 Aug 03. Overall, security issues continue to delay progress throughout the country and continue to create new priorities for work.

A view from down range: Major Joe Hanus

The calendar on my desk in the Deputy District Engineer office back on Galveston Island still reads Sunday, 12 January 2003. I have not had time to change the date. The next day I became part of the mission known now as Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil (TF RIO). The US Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division, was assigned the task to develop a plan, and eventually execute, for the restoration of the Iraqi oil and gas infrastructure following combat operations to liberate Iraq. I volunteered to help with the mission planning and eventually became the Deputy Project Manager, North Area Office, based in Kirkuk, Iraq. Kirkuk is centered



on nearly 40% of Iraq's oil, stored deep in domes under the rolling hills of north Iraq. This oil and the associated gas would become critical to the future of the Iraqi people.

Sitting at our kitchen table late one night in February, I told my wife Denise that I would be heading to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since joining the military in 1984 I had deployed around the world to many dangerous places, but Iraq would be different and we knew it. I spent the next few weeks transitioning out of my Galveston position, working as a liaison with TF RIO's primary contractor (Kellogg, Brown and Root, KBR) in Houston and preparing Denise and my daughters (Anna, 4, and Allison, 2.) for the eventual separation. In the early morning on March 29, I kissed Anna and Allison good-bye, hugged Denise as a friend and husband, and headed out the door to begin my deployment with TF RIO.

My deployment to Iraq included a week through Fort Benning, Georgia and two weeks in preparation in Kuwait. Because of the importance of TF RIO's mission, I deployed to Kirkuk shortly after that city was liberated in April. I arrived on the second U.S. Air Force plane to land at the Kirkuk airfield. Arriving Easter morning on a dark runway, I linked up with the USACE advance team that had successfully shutdown the oil system to prevent internal failure. It was now TF RIO's mission to restore and restart the north oil and gas infrastructure to pre-war production levels to secure the future for Iraq.

What was my job as the Deputy Project Manager, North Area Office? My primary responsibility was to provide military leadership to more than 60 DoD civilians and U.S. Government contractors. Our area of responsibility spanned across north Iraq, from Baghdad to the border with Turkey. We worked with a multitude of Iraqi oil and gas companies under the Iraqi Ministry of Oil. Our office was responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing over sixty projects worth hundreds of millions of dollars to effect the restoration of the north oil and gas infrastructure to pre-war production levels. I attended countless meetings, helped develop numerous engineering solutions, drove thousands of miles to assess nearly a hundred facilities, and ate cases of MREs (not all at once!).

But what did I really do? Simply put, I helped build relationships as the foundation for TF RIO's success. These relationships were built slowly over time as trust and confidence grew between the North Area Officer personnel, Coalition forces and the Iraqi people. I believe I was successful for simple reasons. For example, on Fridays we would routinely attend a luncheon with the leadership of the North Oil Company, a group of newly appointed Arabs, Kurds and Turkamen. This multi-ethnic group shared a meal that was an example of their commitment to face challenges and celebrate triumphs together. We formed the Joint Engineering Restoration Committee. The JERCs, with a bit of humor in their title, was a group of Americans and Iraqi engineers that effectively developed a comprehensive program to restore the north oil and gas infrastructure. We laughed together and the Iraqis claimed, "We are all team RIO, Iraqis and Americans!" Everyday I smiled, I shook hands, and I waved at everyone I drove by. In the end, they hugged me, they kissed me, they called me "Brother", and I felt I left a little bit behind with them. I did all I could to help them, every hour, every day.

I was extremely privileged and honored to have served with the individuals that made up TF RIO, both Americans and Iraqis. Their efforts have been extraordinary and history making. In September I will return to the Galveston District and next summer I will go back to school to earn a PhD to return to teaching at West Point. I look forward to sharing my TF RIO's experiences and stories. I have served proudly on Freedom's frontier in Germany, Korea and now Iraq. I joined the Army to defend freedom and I can live my life contently because I know that I have helped the Iraqi people move forward towards the freedom and quality of life they deserve.



MAJ Joe Hanus with Dr. Basil and Mr. Walid Wally"
(Proud JERC Members!)

Scheduled For Deployment: Deploying to the CRC on 7 September: Paul Bisdorf, Tulsa District; Jeromy Caldwell, Tulsa District; William Graney, Seattle District; Ira Mathews, Fort Worth District; Mike McAleer, Portland District; Josette Pullen, Northwestern Division; Robert Stubbs, Tulsa District; Steven Waite, New England District.

Scheduled to Return: 6 Sep: Martha Stevenson, Fort Worth District; Jim Gilmore, Southwestern Division; Larry Gil, Pittsburgh District. 8 Sep: SSG Bonnie Smith, Army Reserve; MAJ Joe Hanus, Galveston District. 9 Sep: James Cook, Huntsville District; Pat McLaughlin, Tulsa District.

A view from down range: Lt. Col. Keith Martin

Photo and Story by Steve Wright



Were the Coalition Battle Plans for the recent combat in Iraq changed based on oil field considerations and recommendations made by the US Army Corps of Engineers Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil (TF RIO)?

Lt. Col. Keith Martin thinks so.

Martin, an initial member of the TF RIO team, said the battle plans were completed and ready to be implemented when TF RIO recommendations caused a different approach.

“The battle plans were staged and we came in and threw a pretty good wrench into them.”

What was of strategic importance was the timing of the attack. Originally the plan was to have a short air campaign followed by a

land attack.

But oil experts pointed out that if we tipped our hand with the air campaign, the Iraqis might possibly destroy their oil infrastructure and the export terminals. Our worst-case scenario was to have Iraq’s entire 1,800 wells torched. As possible evidence, we had what had happened in Kuwait when the Iraqis destroyed more than 700 wells as Coalition Forces rolled into that country.

TF RIO thought the risk of possible destruction of some of the world’s largest oil fields and their support infrastructure was high enough to recommend changing the plan. The leadership was convinced that they needed to strike on land first to secure the oil fields, refining and distribution structure. Without the capability to produce oil, the Iraqi economy was doomed for the foreseeable future.

We also told planners that the oil fields were potential obstacles to maneuver. We had to teach people how oil fields work. The fields could have posed an industrial hazard to the battlefield, which could have been as dangerous as almost any more traditional battle hazard,” Martin said.

“I knew we had everyone’s attention when the Marines said that there needed to be well aimed shots in the vicinity of the oil infrastructure. That phrase stuck with me throughout the securing of the oil fields,” Martin said.

“In our planning, we had to figure out how to turn everything off so it wouldn’t self destruct.

A dual-track plan was plotted.

“First, we had an information campaign that included a series of leaflets and broadcasts to let the Iraqi oil workers know that to save the infrastructure was to save their jobs and the Iraqi economy. We urged them to shut down their facilities safely.

“Our second plan was to have soldiers trained to shut down the facilities if necessary. In the south we had Brits trained with the Marines and in the north members of the 4th Infantry Division were trained to shut things down,” Martin said.

One potential problem that arose was the inability of the 4th Infantry to enter Iraq through Turkey. As a result, the soldiers trained to shut down the oil fields never arrived to accomplish this task. Thankfully, the Iraqis never moved to destroy northern oil fields.

“In the south many of the Iraqis had turned off the pumps and shut down the wells as we had asked in our broadcasts and leaflets. In the north, most oil workers continued to produce oil and export it though the Iraq to Turkey Pipeline. This is one of the reasons storage facilities in Turkey were filled to capacity with eight million barrels of oil,” Martin said.

Martin is referring to the oil storage tanks in Ceyhan, Turkey that contained eight million barrels of oil after the war. Ceyhan is located on the Mediterranean Sea and is the export terminal for the Iraq to Turkey pipeline.

The stored oil at Ceyhan was the first Iraqi oil to be exported from Iraq after the war on June 22. Iraq has just now again beginning to export on through this pipeline to Ceyhan for export.

"When the Coalition Forces entered Iraq they had a big success. They arrived in Baghdad months before they expected to be there. The large majority of the troops were involved in this swift movement, so few were left for security. This is when the looting occurred," Martin said.

"In the short term this wasn't critical. We were able to produce oil within a month. We gave preferential treatment to distribution areas like the pipelines. We had power issues. The power stations needed oil and the oil industry needed power. It was a classic chicken or the egg situation," Martin said.

"My job was to work with the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), the war fighters, and explain what was happening in the oil fields and why. We had done a pretty good job of educating people and they valued our input, but then the war was over and we were assigned to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Baghdad, Ambassador Bremer's group," Martin said.

TF RIO had been attached to the Coalition Land Forces until June 15, 2003 when the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) picked them up. Martin who had been RIO's liaison with CFLCC moved to Baghdad and shifted to providing liaison with the CPA.

"We had to start over with the CPA staff. While the folks at the CPA were certainly smart, they didn't have a detailed understanding of how complex it was to operate the oil infrastructure.

"They wondered why we couldn't just do it. They didn't understand the difficulty of incorporating the Iraqis into our ways of doing things and us into theirs. So, we had to start over again with the education process.

Just being there to provide support and help them understand what was needed was essential. We had to show our faces and become part of the team. They needed Mr. (Phil) Carroll there to explain the oil business and it helped to have me there because I knew the war fighters and the oil business," Martin said.

Martin says the TF RIO's mission has evolved from seizing and securing the oilfields and fighting oil fires to restoring the Iraqi production capability.

"We started with a very clear mission—seize and secure the oil fields. Next, we helped the Iraqis restart their infrastructure and begin exporting. Now we can really take off since we have an agreement with CPA and the Iraqi Ministry of Oil on what to do about key infrastructure elements needed to return to prewar production.," Martin said.

The agreement referenced is a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, Task Force RIO commander, Dr. Thamir Ghadban, Chief Executive Officer at the Ministry of Oil, and Phillip Carroll, the CPA's senior Advisor to the Ministry of Oil. This agreement provides a plan to undertake some 222 oil infrastructure projects at a cost of \$1.14 billion in nine months ending March 31, 2004.

"I think Iraq has a huge potential. The Iraqi engineers have done well with what they had, but poor maintenance has begun to show. They aren't able to operate at a high efficiency, but here there is so much oil that economics don't really play a big role.

It will take some time for them to get used to making decisions without checking them out with someone. Perhaps they need some of General Flowers' *Just Do It* cards. When initiative is rewarded, and they don't have to always call Baghdad, this place will be really good," Martin predicted.

"It has been tough, but fun for the most part. It is humbling to know that decisions we've made affected world economics. It's going to be tough going back to a normal job, especially when you think about what we've done here," he said.

Martin was one of a group of U.S. Army Reserve officers who had oil industry experience and helped TF RIO define and conduct their mission. For his contributions to TF RIO Martin received the Army's Bronze Star.

"HOOAH!!"

MICHAEL L. SCHULTZ, COLONEL, EN
Acting Commander,
Southwestern Division